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Security Council

Fifty-sixth year

Provisional

4264th meeting

Thursday, 25 January 2001, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Mahbubani	(Singapore)
Members:	Bangladesh	Mr. Ahmed
	China	Mr. Shen Guofang
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Ireland	Mr. Ryan
	Jamaica	Mr. Ward
	Mali*	Mr. Ouane
	Mauritius	Mr. Neewoor
	Norway	Mr. Strømmen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Tunisia	Mr. Ben Mustapha
	Ukraine	Mr. Kuchynski
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation in Sierra Leone

Note by the President of the Security Council (S/2000/1195).

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

01-22675 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Sierra Leone

Note by the President of the Security Council (S/2000/1195)

The President: I would first like to make a procedural announcement. I would like to inform the members of the Council and others in the Chamber that I plan to carry on with this morning's meeting until about 1 p.m. We will suspend the meeting at about 1 p.m. and resume promptly at 3 p.m. to hear the remaining speakers. I thought it would be useful for members to know this as they plan the day ahead.

I would now like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Belgium, Burkina Faso, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Sweden, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Kamara (Sierra Leone) took a seat at the Council table; Mr. Adam (Belgium), Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso), Mr. Duval (Canada), Mr. Bouah-Kamon (Côte d'Ivoire), Mr. Jagne (Gambia), Mr. Camara (Guinea), Mr. Captan (Liberia) and Mr. Schori (Sweden) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation, under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure, to Mr. Anwarul Karim Chowdhury, Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1132 (1997) concerning Sierra Leone.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Ambassador Chowdhury to take a seat at the Council table.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation to the Permanent Observer of Switzerland to the United Nations to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Staehelin (Switzerland) took the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the note of the President of the Security Council enclosing a letter dated 19 December 2000 from the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1132 (1997) concerning Sierra Leone transmitting the report of the Panel of Experts established by resolution 1306 (2000), document S/2000/1195.

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to the following documents: S/2000/1232, note by the President of the Security Council, enclosing a letter dated 21 December 2000 from the Permanent Observer of Switzerland to the President of the Security Council; S/2001/8 and S/2001/74, letters dated 28 December 2000 and 23 January 2001, respectively, from the Gambia to the President of the Security Council; S/2001/6, letter dated 3 January 2001 from Liberia to the President of the Security Council; and S/2001/78, letter dated 24 January 2001 from Liberia to the Secretary-General.

I shall now give the floor to Mr. Anwarul Karim Chowdhury, Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1132 (1997) concerning Sierra Leone.

Mr. Chowdhury: I am happy that, finally, the report of the Panel of Experts appointed by the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 1306 (2000), in relation to Sierra Leone, is being presented at this open meeting of the Council.

I thank you, Mr. President, for setting aside a full day for this meeting, despite the heavy schedule of the Council as the month of January draws to a close. This will allow for comments on the report by all interested countries, which I am sure will take us forward in the full implementation of the measures imposed by the Security Council concerning the situation in Sierra Leone.

Today's meeting is of much significance, as this is the second time that the Council has considered the report of a panel consisting of independent experts. The recent trend in the Council to recommend the appointment of panels of experts to take an in-depth look into subjects about which the Council has inadequate or very little information has been a welcome and useful practice.

The present Panel was appointed by the Secretary-General on 2 August 2000, for an initial period of four months from its effective entry into operation, to collect information on the possible violations of the measures imposed by Council resolution 1171 (1998) and the link between the trade in diamonds and the trade in arms, as well as to consider the inadequacy of air traffic control systems in the region. The Panel commenced its work on 21 August and submitted its report to me on 14 December last year.

The five members of the Panel, Ambassador Martin Chungong Ayafor, who acted as the Chairman of the Panel, Mr. Ian Smillie, Mr. Johan Peleman, Mr. Harjit Sandhu, and Mr. Atabou Bodian, are here with me today here at the Security Council table. They represent expertise encompassing the fields outlined in the mandate of Council resolution 1306 (2000). This broad array of expertise has been of immense value in the discharge of the task given to the Panel. I would like to express my appreciation to each one of them for the dedication and thorough professionalism with which they conducted their work as Panel members within the given time.

I am happy to note that the Panel has been very careful with the information it used to substantiate its findings. On page 15 of the report, the standards of verification in the investigations carried out by the Panel are elaborated. The Panel required at least two credible direct sources of information on an issue before its inclusion in the report as a finding of the Panel. Where only one source was available but the information was thought to be credible and relevant, the source has been indicated in the report.

The Panel took this approach because the issues under investigation needed to be looked at carefully and objectively. It examined how and why Sierra Leone's conflict diamonds are able to find their way into the legitimate diamond trade with relative ease. It examined how weapons reach the Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone, in spite of United Nations arms embargoes being in place. It examined the adequacy of the air traffic control system in the West African region and made recommendations on ways to improve them. As a result of its investigations, the Panel has come up with a number of findings. These were presented, along with the observations and recommendations of the Panel in its report, in accordance with Council resolution 1306 (2000), and can be found in document S/2000/1195.

Following submission, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1132 (1997) considered the report and forwarded it to the Security Council on 19 December. The Council subsequently decided to have this meeting today, 25 January, after the Committee had considered the report further at its meeting on 10 January.

After its first meeting, in August last year, the Panel, in its four months of work, travelled widely, meeting Government officials, law enforcement agencies, United Nations agency representatives, journalists and members of civil society organizations, as well as individuals and companies in the private sector. It examined a large amount of documentation and statistical data. Together, singly or in groups, Panel members visited 21 countries in connection with their assignment, including the relevant countries in West Africa, as well as all major diamond trading and polishing centres. Generally, the Panel members received cooperation and support from the Governments concerned and the private sector.

The report details the findings of the Panel of Experts on the three major areas. As regards diamonds, the Panel collected information contained in part I of the report, on the illegal exploitation of Sierra Leone diamonds and its new diamond certification system. It also collected information on international diamond statistics and transit countries. Based on its findings, the Panel has made specific recommendations. I draw the Security Council's attention to the

recommendations contained in paragraphs 155 through 166 in this regard.

As contained in part II of the report, the Panel collected information on weapons and related *matériel*, transport and air traffic control in the West Africa region. Based on the information it collected, the Panel arrived at certain conclusions on these areas, which are contained in paragraphs 252 through 254. The Panel also made specific recommendations in this regard. I would draw the Security Council's attention to those recommendations, which are contained in paragraphs 255 through 269 of the report.

In part III of the report, a technical analysis of air traffic control systems in West Africa has been included, and ways of improving the system have been identified. Recommendations stemming from the analysis have been consolidated in paragraph 269 of the report.

In addition to these recommendations on three specific areas, the Panel has offered some concluding recommendations, contained in paragraphs 271 through 273 of the report.

The Panel was not able to investigate in detail some of the information that came to its attention later in the course of its work. A number of such outstanding matters have been mentioned in the report, in particular in paragraphs 246 through 251.

In adopting resolution 1306 (2000), in paragraph 20 the Council expressed its readiness to consider appropriate action on the basis of the report under consideration. In its report, the Panel has made specific recommendations, as well as recommendations of a broader nature. Some of the recommendations are procedural in nature, while some recommendations on systemic issues have been made for tightening implementation of the measures in a broader context.

Apart from the Security Council's proactive role, international cooperation and solidarity are needed to realize many of the recommendations. In particular, the development of a better regulatory framework for the air traffic control systems in the region cannot be done without such cooperation, and both technical and financial assistance are required. I make this point to underscore that a comprehensive approach is needed to address the situation in Sierra Leone, an approach that will also involve actors other than the Council itself.

Follow-up actions on the recommendations is a very important area that the Security Council must emphasize. I believe that the Council can adopt various approaches in considering the recommendations and determining follow-up actions. All the recommendations contained in the Panel's report should get full, due and thorough consideration. The effort and resources dedicated to this exercise should not be wasted. The report must not get a proverbial place on some shelf gathering dust.

I would like to conclude this presentation by highlighting a passage in which the Panel, during its visit to Sierra Leone, was reminded of the background of its mandate and of the human dimension of the tragedy of the people of Sierra Leone. There, thousands of civilians — many of them children — victims of unspeakable brutality, face an uncertain future. Tens of thousands of Sierra Leoneans have lost their lives. Half a million have become refugees, and three or four times that number have been displaced.

As we meet today, much of Sierra Leone remains in rebel hands, and people there live without access to basic amenities of life — medical assistance, education or the means to a secure a livelihood. The Panel and the sanctions Committee, which I chair, remain cognizant of this vital dimension of the problem and believe that the formal presentation of the report today will spur adequate action by the Security Council to help end the suffering of the people of Sierra Leone and this decade-long tragedy.

Mr. Eldon (United Kingdom): Thank you, Mr. President, for arranging this meeting today, and thanks also to Ambassador Chowdhury for the impressive introduction that he has just given to our debate. It is a particular pleasure to see the members of the Panel of Experts sitting behind him today.

The report of the Panel is welcome and thorough. Its members have worked hard and methodically over the past few months to produce a document that pulls no punches. Their findings on continuing violations of the United Nations arms and diamond embargoes on Sierra Leone are disturbing in the extreme.

We strongly welcome the Panel's endorsement of the concept of a global certification scheme for rough diamonds. In this context, let me emphasize our strong support for last year's General Assembly resolution 55/56, on conflict diamonds, which the United Kingdom co-sponsored, and our commitment to

participating fully in international efforts to take this important work forward as a matter of priority. We want to see a simple, workable international framework in place at an early date. The aim of this framework should be to protect the legitimate diamond trade and enhance its reputation, while dealing a death blow to the illicit diamond trade.

We support the Panel's recommendation that the Government of Sierra Leone should act to enhance the credibility of its certification regime. The steps necessary include auditing dealers, developing support systems to bring small artisanal miners into the formal diamond industry and developing transparent methods of ensuring that diamond profits are used to benefit the people of Sierra Leone.

The United Kingdom would like to see a greatly enhanced capacity within the United Nations Secretariat for supporting the Council and the sanctions Committees on all aspects of sanctions, including their design, implementation, monitoring and enforcement. This could include action to profile the arms brokers and intermediaries responsible for supplying weapons to the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). We hope that the informal working group on sanctions will make recommendations to this effect.

On the role of arms-exporting countries, the United Kingdom urges all Member States exporting arms to make thorough checks on the proposed end use of arms exports at the time of licensing. These checks should include querying suspect end-user certificates with the countries concerned and circulating details of false end-user certificates to other countries for information. We support the Panel's recommendation for closer cooperation between the Security Council and the World Customs Organization.

The Panel's report usefully identifies a number of individuals and companies involved in sanctions violations and a number of countries from whose territory such violations are taking place. The United Kingdom will look very seriously at any hint that United Kingdom citizens and companies might be involved in violating sanctions and will investigate fully where necessary. We urge other States to do the same and to ensure that violation of United Nations sanctions is a criminal offence in their domestic legislation.

We are alarmed at the malign role played by individuals such as Victor Bout in the illicit arms supply chain. We call on the Governments of all Member States to ensure that their territory is not being used as a base of operations for such people. There should be no sanctuary for sanctions busters.

We note with particular concern the Panel's conclusion that Liberian President Charles Taylor is actively involved in fuelling the violence in Sierra Leone through both financial and military support. The Panel has also found that the bulk of RUF diamonds are smuggled out of Sierra Leone through Liberia and that Liberian-registered aircraft are being used for illicit arms deliveries.

In the light of these findings, there can no longer be a shadow of a doubt that President Taylor has callously been prolonging the conflict in Sierra Leone for personal gain. As a result, tens of thousands of innocents have been killed or maimed. This cannot be allowed to continue. The United Kingdom welcomes recent statements by President Taylor announcing his intention of halting support for the RUF and of acting on certain of the Panel's recommendations. But these overtures to the international community are, frankly, too little too late. In the meantime, we hear increasing reports of Liberian support for recent attacks by the rebel movement in Guinea, which have left hundreds dead. Liberian actions are threatening the stability of the entire region. It is high time for the Security Council to act.

The United States and the United Kingdom are therefore co-sponsoring a draft resolution now under negotiation in the Security Council which would impose, under Chapter VII of the Charter, a range of measures on Liberia designed to put effective pressure on President Taylor and his associates to change their ways. These measures have been carefully crafted to have minimal consequences for ordinary Liberians, while making Liberian support for the RUF more difficult. They include a ban on Liberian rough diamonds, a ban on flights by Liberian registered aircraft, a new arms embargo, a selective travel ban on senior Liberian officials and a ban on the import of Liberian timber. We hope that those present in this Chamber will recognize the reasons why it is imperative that the Security Council should impose these measures as quickly as possible. The draft resolution makes clear that sanctions will be lifted as soon as the Council sees an end to Liberian financial and military support for the RUF in Sierra Leone and

for armed rebel movements in other neighbouring countries.

Ultimately, it is for President Taylor to recognize that he can no longer hide behind statements of innocence. The quicker he realizes this and shows a commitment to the well-being of the Liberian people and regional peace, the sooner Liberia can be brought back into the international fold.

The Panel deserves our warmest congratulations for a very thorough piece of work, but there is much still to do. We believe that its mandate should be extended for a further period to enable it to make further investigations into support for armed rebel groups in this region and to continue to turn the international spotlight on the dark world of sanctions busting. We hope that the current team will be willing to devote more time to this extremely important task.

Mr. Ward (Jamaica): My delegation wishes at the outset to thank Ambassador Chowdhury for the major efforts that he has expended in bringing this report to the Council. We also wish to thank the Panel for having provided us with a comprehensive, meaningful report.

My delegation welcomes the report of the Panel established by Security Council resolution 1306 (2000), aimed at determining the link between illegal exploitation of resources and the perpetuation of the conflict in Sierra Leone. We believe that it is a timely reminder to the Council that sanctions regimes which it adopts require constant monitoring and adjustments to ensure their successful observance and efficacy. Indeed, my delegation believes that it is naïve to think that sanctions committees meeting in the basement of the United Nations Secretariat in New York can effectively monitor sanctions half a world away.

Accordingly, we urge that serious consideration be given to the recommendation of the Panel that the Security Council establish an ongoing capacity to monitor the implementation of sanctions as well as to study their unintended effects on third parties and individuals. In that regard, the work of the Committee on sanctions will give full consideration to this issue.

The Angola-UNITA monitoring mechanism was a good and a useful innovation. It is now possible to state categorically that the sanctions against UNITA are succeeding in degrading the capacity of UNITA to continue its military campaign. That monitoring mechanism provides a good example of what can be done when sanctions are effectively monitored.

As the report of the Panel informs us, violations of the sanctions regime are widespread and occur with impunity. Already, the work of the Panel of Experts has borne fruit as Governments and other entities have begun to focus on what can be done to improve the enforcement of sanctions and to curtail existing violations.

Those who have aided in violating sanctions are equally culpable for the humanitarian tragedy still unfolding in Sierra Leone and pressure must be brought to bear by the international community to ensure compliance with Council resolutions. My delegation is disturbed by the frequency with which the Panel, in all aspects of sanctions violations, implicated some of Sierra Leone's neighbours.

My delegation pays tribute to the nations of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which by their actions have demonstrated that the true measure of neighbourliness is that nations care enough to take positive action to lift other nations out of cycles of violence, rather than profiteering from the misery of others. By seeking to return stability in the political and security spheres to the region, the nations of ECOWAS are paving the way for other aspects of development to occur.

The imposition of measures to redress sanctions violations will not be taken lightly by the Council, and my delegation believes that whatever punitive measures are adopted by the Council must have minimum collateral effect on unintended targets and must be precisely aimed at those who have been unambiguously implicated in sanctions violations; a broad-brush approach will have little support from my delegation.

In this regard, my delegation is very supportive of the recommendation to better regulate the flow of rough diamonds from producing countries. It is unacceptable that countries with small amounts of proven exports of rough diamonds can be allowed to circumvent sanctions by laundering illegal exports through their territory. All diamond-exporting countries in West Africa should be encouraged to adopt as a matter of urgency a certification system similar to that adopted by Sierra Leone. These countries should be given the opportunity to implement a system which

will not hinder their own legitimate exports but will prevent the profits from perpetuating the conflict.

We are equally concerned about the ease with which small arms are supplied to the region. The responsibility for the proliferation of weapons into West Africa lies with the producing countries, as well as with those that trans-ship them. The ECOWAS Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons in West Africa is a good and useful mechanism upon which we can build. The Council — and, indeed, the international community — must assist the ECOWAS countries to initiate a common system of controls that includes the recording, licensing, collection and destruction of small weapons.

The Panel also recommends that strict controls on airspace in West Africa be effected in order to curb the movement of both illicit rough diamonds and small weapons. This will necessarily involve the installation of new monitoring and surveillance equipment. The countries of the region will need international assistance to acquire and maintain such a monitoring system, and we urge expeditious assistance in this regard.

The measures recommended by the Panel will be effective only if all Member States adhere to the terms of the sanctions resolutions. We owe it to the people of Sierra Leone to ensure that the riches of their country are used for the development of the country and not to perpetuate war.

My delegation will give careful consideration to the recommendations made by the Panel, in particular those that the Chairman of the Committee has highlighted in his introduction of the report. As he stated so emphatically, the Panel's work should not be wasted or be allowed to gather dust. The greatest tribute to the Panel's work will be to ensure that the Security Council acts decisively on its recommendations.

Mr. Levitte (France) *(spoke in French)*: I would like to thank Ambassador Chowdhury for presenting the report of the Panel of Experts, and I congratulate the members of the Panel of Experts, who are sitting behind him here in the Chamber.

First of all, I would like to say that my delegation associates itself fully with the statement to be made by the Ambassador of Sweden later in this debate on behalf of the European Union.

We are pleased that the report of the Panel of Experts set up by resolution 1306 (2000) to study the question of the trade in diamonds and arms in connection with Sierra Leone is today being taken up at an open debate of the Security Council. For us, it is a fundamental point of principle that reports that in one way or another implicate States should be dealt with in a two-way debate that is transparent and open to all. This is also an important opportunity for members of the Security Council and all Members of our Organization to enter into a dialogue in which all can participate and give their views.

Before turning to the content of some of the recommendations made by the Panel of Experts, I would like to tell Council members that France greatly appreciates the content of this report. The work that has been done by the Experts is serious and comprehensive. The information seems to us better supported than that of some reports presented last year. The report demonstrates clearly that there is a complex and confusing network of support for the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). Above and beyond the responsibility of Liberia, which we all hope will change its errant ways of the past, we should all give thought — and this includes members of the Security Council, members of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and of African subregional organizations, countries that buy diamonds and countries that sell weapons — to how to put a stop to the organized criminals who profit from and take advantage of the Sierra Leonean conflict and, unfortunately, other conflicts in Africa.

These criminals often act, as can be seen clearly from the report, without the knowledge of the competent national authorities, who, because of lack of resources or lack of political will, are not able to control what they do.

The same names crop up time and again in one report after another. I shall mention only one name — Victor Bout — who supposedly has a fleet of over 50 aircraft and who has been implicated in many illegal trafficking operations throughout Africa, supporting the most reprehensible movements, such as RUF and UNITA.

It is high time the international community acted as one and put an end to this kind of activity. All countries must cooperate to this end.

France particularly welcomes two general recommendations in the report. It is our deepest hope that specific follow-up action will be taken on them. The first deals with broadening the certification regime for Sierra Leonean diamonds. The Experts hope that this regime can serve as a model in the framework of the so-called Kimberley process. We support that idea. We also support the idea of gradually extending the Sierra Leonean certification regime to all neighbouring countries and to the subregion.

The second recommendation aims at better monitoring of exports of small arms by producing countries. Strengthening customs controls, with appropriate support from the international community, is a priority in this regard.

Much of the report is devoted to the role Liberian authorities are playing in the conflict in Sierra Leone and the ongoing support they have been giving to the rebel movement: providing it with weapons, buying its diamonds and giving refuge to some of its officials. We would like to think that the publication of this report, the awareness of the situation on the part of the international community and the ensuing damage done to Liberia would lead the Liberian Government to revise its policy drastically. However, too many promises have been made in the past for us to be content with nice words. Thus France supports the principle of establishing an effective sanctions regime against the Liberian leaders. We are not here advocating a punitive approach, but rather a motivational system that would complement the steps that are to be taken at the national level. France was particularly encouraged by the recent decision by Liberia to expel from Monrovia all the leaders of the RUF living there.

Beyond Liberia, the settlement of this crisis in West Africa will also require the good will of all the neighbouring countries and a desire to move towards regional peace, rather than futilely pouring oil on the flames.

In our view, in order to have a positive impact the sanctions regime to be adopted by the Security Council must respect the following principles.

First, the sanctions proposed must be for a limited time. This does not mean going along in any way with the reprehensible machinations of the Liberian authorities; it is simply a question of making sure that the Security Council will be able to review the whole issue in depth and on a regular basis — including, if necessary, evaluating at the appropriate time the extension of these sanctions.

Secondly, the sanctions proposed must in no way penalize or affect the Liberian people, who are among the poorest in the world. The sanctions proposed must be linked to the conflict in Sierra Leone and Liberia's involvement in it.

Thirdly, the sanctions proposed must be motivational and be linked to precise criteria for their lifting. The Liberian authorities must understand well what they have to do to get the sanctions to which they are subject lifted.

Fourthly, the proposed sanctions must not interfere with the possible development of a solution that may be negotiated with the help of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The sanctions must be an element in an overall political settlement, and not a replacement for such a settlement. The views of ECOWAS — a body that is directly involved in dealing with this crisis — must be heard and respected by the Security Council.

Fifthly, France advocates an incremental approach to the implementation of sanctions, so as to allow the democratically elected Government of Liberia to shoulder its responsibilities.

By continuing to support the RUF, the Liberian leaders would be assuming a heavy responsibility for increasingly isolating their country from the international community, thus hobbling its chances for development. We would urge these leaders not to make this choice, but rather to cooperate fully, with a view of establishing a lasting regional peace.

Mr. Ouane (Mali) (*spoke in French*): At the outset I would like to thank you, Sir, for having convened this meeting of the Security Council so that Ambassador Chowdhury, the Chairman of the Security Council Committee for Sierra Leone, could introduce to us the report of the Panel of Experts set up pursuant to paragraph 19 of section B of Council resolution 1306 (2000) on Sierra Leone. We thank Ambassador Chowdhury for his introductory remarks, and we

welcome here the members of the Panel of Experts who are here today.

The report before the Council contains information and recommendations regarding many countries of West Africa, in addition to Sierra Leone. In this regard, we welcome the convening, in the next few days, of another meeting between the Security Council and an important delegation from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), led by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mali. This meeting, which is a carry-over of the meeting of 21 June 2000, will be broader and more in depth. I will therefore confine myself here to a few preliminary comments.

First, ECOWAS is greatly concern about the conflicts ripping apart the subregion of West Africa, in particular because of the continuation of the conflict in Sierra Leone. Confronted with this situation, in 1998 ECOWAS adopted a moratorium on the import and export of light weapons in West Africa. Also, in a more limited fashion the twenty-third summit of ECOWAS, held in Abuja in May 2000, called for a regional investigation of trafficking in arms and diamonds. The upcoming meeting of the Security Council with the ECOWAS ministerial delegation will provide a useful opportunity for an update on this investigation.

Secondly, the United Nations and ECOWAS must work together to restore peace in Sierra Leone and the entire West African region. In this connection, we are greatly pleased by the mission of the Security Council to Sierra Leone and the West African region last October, and the subsequent recommendations it made. We also welcome the decision by the Secretary-General to conduct a United Nations inter-agency mission in West Africa, which from 9 to 24 February will visit 10 countries in our region. It is important that the mandate of this mission include assessing the needs and priorities of West Africa for peace and security.

We have great hopes for that mission. Under its terms of reference, it should submit recommendations for and elements of a regional strategy to be implemented by the United Nations or, possibly, by the United Nations in cooperation with ECOWAS, with a view to meeting the needs and dealing with the problems that are identified.

Thirdly, ECOWAS will do everything it can to work with the Security Council, in particular in the search for a solution to the Sierra Leone conflict. The report before the Council is intended to contribute to this goal, and the comments by ECOWAS on this report will be given at the upcoming meeting of the Council with the ECOWAS ministerial delegation.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to express its thanks to you, Sir, for having made this an open debate in which all the Member States might participate. The relationship between diamonds and weapons is a topic of interest to many States, as was shown by the debate held by the recent General Assembly on the role of diamonds in promoting conflicts.

We would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh, who presides over the sanctions Committee for Sierra Leone, for the admirable determination with which he has led the work of the Committee and for the arrangements he made to bring before us today, here in New York, the Panel of Experts responsible for the report on diamonds and arms in Sierra Leone.

We believe that the work done by the Panel of Experts chaired by Mr. Ayafor merits our thanks and appreciation, given the quality of the work done, the quantity of information collected and the tremendous contribution of their work to the work of the Committee established by the Security Council concerning Sierra Leone. We are pleased that the Experts focused not only on the relationship between the diamond trade and the supply of arms to the rebels of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), but that they also addressed the use of aircraft of varying provenance in the transport of weapons and in violations of sanctions. As a result, we have before us a report whose recommendations are amply substantiated by facts.

With regard to the report's specific recommendations on diamonds, we find it morally repugnant that diamond mines in Sierra Leone should serve as a source of suffering for the people of Sierra Leone while at the same time being a symbol of ostentation and prosperity to other peoples. It is clear that the production of diamonds is important to the economic livelihood of various nations and that Sierra Leone's participation in the world diamond trade is relatively small. But, added to that of other countries in conflict, Sierra Leone's share has taken on considerable dimensions with in the context of international peace and security.

We congratulate the Government of Sierra Leone on having put in place a system to certify diamonds destined for export. We would like to see the expeditious establishment of a global certification system, as called for in General Assembly resolution 55/56. We encourage the World Diamond Council and States participating in the Kimberly process to come to an agreement on this matter as soon as possible.

We deplore that some of the countries mentioned in the report have refused to cooperate with the Panel of Experts by not providing their national diamond export statistics. The Council should urgently encourage those countries to cooperate and to adopt a system of certification similar to Sierra Leone's. Greater controls should also be required of diamond-importing countries. It is necessary to reduce statistical discrepancies, illegal operations and sales of conflict diamonds in the jewellery stores of numerous countries. The customs controls adopted by many of our countries in compliance with the sanctions imposed by the Security Council are our own contribution to bringing about peace in Sierra Leone and to ensuring that its people benefit from their natural resources.

With regard to the report's recommendations on weapons, we must find effective ways to reduce weapon inflows in regions such as West Africa, where countries have imposed a Moratorium on the import of small arms. As the report indicates, responsibility for the flow of arms lies with producing countries, countries that trans-ship weapons and countries using weapons. We believe it is the Council's duty to strengthen international measures to limit weapon flows into West Africa. Weapon-producing countries bear special responsibility and should be the first to monitor transactions destined for conflict areas, areas under moratorium and areas under Security Council embargoes. Companies that manufacture weapons should not hide behind the excuse that they are not responsible because they license foreign companies to produce arms and do not themselves produce any directly. Like many companies that produce weapons, an international trafficker such as Victor Bout, who is mentioned in the report, supported by lax weapon-export regimes, can become a genuine threat to international peace and security.

Another aspect of the arms situation is the high number of child soldiers in the conflict in Sierra Leone. This is closely related to the fact that they are able to use the increasingly light weapons issued to them.

Turning to the report's recommendations on air traffic, I would like to recognize the difficulties encountered by airport authorities in West African countries in relation to controlling the operations of aircraft used to transport weapons in the region. We believe that the Council should indeed insist on a more transparent registry of ships and aircraft in countries dispensing flags of convenience. As the Panel of Experts suggests, the International Civil Aviation Administration should also be more actively involved in technical cooperation activities aimed at equipping the region's airports and should even consider deploying flight supervisors to critical areas.

With regard to the report's recommendations concerning Liberia, I wish to say that the Panel of Experts has given us many signs of the involvement of that country's Government in the sale of diamonds and weapons to rebels in Sierra Leone, including in association with companies carrying out illicit operations. We are deeply concerned that even the natural resources of Liberia's forests have been compromised in order to fuel these operations. We regret that time constraints prevented the Experts from describing in greater detail how Sierra Leone's diamonds are exported through Liberia.

We are encouraged by the decision of the Government of Liberia to participate in this debate through the presence of its Minister for Foreign Affairs. The Government of Liberia must be aware that the Security Council requires the cooperation of West African countries to promote peace and security in the region, including in Sierra Leone. The Council is prepared to respond vigorously to any violation of the sanctions applied against the members of the RUF.

With regard to the monitoring of sanctions, my delegation was discouraged to read the Panel of Experts' observation in paragraph 47 of their report that Security Council resolutions on diamonds and weapons are violated with impunity. We believe it is necessary to continue to deny the enemies of peace in Sierra Leone access to arms and diamond markets. We look forward to the upcoming opportunity to hold a dialogue with the member States of the Economic Community of West African States on this situation here in New York.

In conclusion, we believe that, beyond a regime of sanctions applicable to a single country or to a group of rebels within a country, we must strengthen the

capacity of the United Nations Secretariat to carry out ongoing monitoring of sanctions and embargoes imposed by the Security Council in fulfilling its mission of safeguarding international peace and security.

Mr. Ben Mustapha (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): I should like first of all to thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this meeting, which will, I am sure, enable us to have a constructive exchange of views on the important issue under consideration today. I should also like to express my great appreciation to Ambassador Chowdhury for his considerable work in guiding the sanctions Committee concerning Sierra Leone.

My delegation joins previous speakers in thanking the Panel of Experts, established pursuant to resolution 1306 (2000) to study the issue of the trade in diamonds and arms in connection with Sierra Leone, for its report.

I should also like to pay tribute to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for its initiative to investigate the illicit trade in and exploitation of diamonds from Sierra Leone. The outcome of the investigation undertaken by ECOWAS — which, we must remember, is in the best position to identify the various aspects of this complex problem and to suggest the most appropriate measures to take in keeping with the specific context of the subregion — should be duly taken into consideration by the Security Council.

Having carefully considered the report of the Panel of Experts before us today, my delegation would like to make several observations and comments. First, we believe that understanding the problem of the illicit trade in diamonds requires a comprehensive and expert approach encompassing, in a verifiable manner, the entire chain of actors involved. We believe, therefore, that in order to be truly effective and fair, it is not enough to analyse merely the individual links in the chain, but, rather, the chain as a whole.

Such an approach should aim to tighten control over the product itself — the diamonds — through concerted and coordinated international action. In this connection, we support the recommendations of the Panel of Experts concerning the need to set up a generalized system of certification and to create a mechanism within the United Nations Secretariat which could continuously monitor the implementation of the sanctions and embargoes imposed by the Council.

Secondly, with regard to the trade in arms, the approach necessary to control the flow of weapons in conflict areas should not be selective. We share the opinion of the Panel of Experts that responsibility for the massive flood of weapons into West Africa lies with producing countries as well as those that transship and use them. I should like in this connection to underscore my delegation's support for the recommendation of the Government of Burkina Faso, which has been endorsed by the Panel of Experts, that the Security Council supervise a mechanism to monitor all weapons imports into the territory of Burkina Faso and the use of such weapons for a period of three years.

Thirdly, the approach that the Security Council should take with regard to the problem of the illicit trade in diamonds and arms in connection with Sierra Leone should be preventive and progressive in nature, based on dialogue and a clear and agreed strategy capable of producing concrete and rapid results while avoiding, insofar as possible, adding to the suffering of the civilian population, which is already exhausted from other humanitarian, social and economic problems. Furthermore, the measures to be taken by the Council should involve only the target concern: the illegal trade in diamonds and arms. Extending sanctions to other areas and activities might cause new difficulties, in particular for the people in the countries concerned, who are already suffering from the impact of armed conflicts in the region. Any sanctions imposed by the Security Council should be tailored to specific objectives; they should have a time limit and contain automatic provisions for their lifting.

In conclusion, I should like to underscore the importance for the Security Council of paying particular attention to the need to ensure that ECOWAS initiatives are not placed in jeopardy. The success of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) interposition mission along the common borders of Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea — which the Council has supported and which should be deployed from 28 February — must be assured, and the Council must accord priority in its deliberations to the follow-up to certain recommendations of the Panel of Experts.

In this connection, we welcome the decision taken by the ECOWAS Ministers for Foreign Affairs to visit New York in the near future in order to meet with

the members of the Security Council. We are convinced that their visit will provide an opportunity for a fruitful exchange of views between the members of the Council and the ECOWAS delegation, led by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mali, on the various aspects of the situation prevailing in the region. We believe also that the visit will lead to the consolidation of the comprehensive and multidimensional approach established by the Council to manage this situation in order to lay the groundwork for lasting peace and stability, not only in Sierra Leone, but in the entire subregion of West Africa.

Mr. Shen Guofang (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): First of all, I should like to thank the Panel of Experts concerning Sierra Leone for its report and Ambassador Chowdhury, the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1132 (1997), for introducing it.

The Chinese delegation has carefully studied the Panel's report and believes that it is comprehensive and is helpful in our further understanding the links between the illegal diamond trade and armed conflict, as well as in assessing the implementation by the countries concerned of Security Council resolutions. The report contains many concrete recommendations, some of which are quite inspiring. We should like to express our appreciation to the Panel for the tireless efforts it has made under the leadership of Ambassador Chowdhury.

We have learned from the report that serious violations of Security Council resolutions are taking place in the region at present. The illegal diamond trade still stands out as a problem, and it has become an important source of income for the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in maintaining and promoting its military ambitions. Furthermore, small arms are everywhere and are easily available to both rebels and criminal elements. We also learned that some countries are directly participating in the trade or are allowing their territories to be used in the providing of arms to Sierra Leone. This situation is one of the most significant reasons why the peace process in Sierra Leone is at such a difficult stage, unable to make progress.

Today, long after the Security Council resolutions were adopted, the fact that the situation remains unresolved is indeed a source of concern and a point worthy of our consideration. We believe that the most urgent task before us is to take concrete measures to effectively curb the illegal diamond trade and the illicit flows of and trafficking in arms so as to reduce the negative effect of these two phenomena on peace in Sierra Leone.

On one hand, the Security Council and the international community need to work harder for peace and to urge the parties in Sierra Leone to effectively implement the agreements already reached. On the other hand, it is necessary to take decisive measures to cut off outside support for the RUF so that it will not entertain any illusions of expanding spheres of influence by military means. In this regard, all countries need to cooperate and coordinate. Many good recommendations have been put forward by the Panel in this regard, and we need to consider and implement them. We also believe, however, that any sanctions imposed will have to be well targeted. We must fully consider and avoid all possible negative humanitarian effects resulting from sanctions. The sanctions must also have a time limit.

The conflict in Sierra Leone has a direct bearing on the stability of neighbouring countries, as well as on peace and security in the region. We must have a comprehensive approach. This problem needs to be considered and approached in a regional context. Sanctions are not the only means available, and are certainly not the best means.

The Security Council must play an important role in seeking a comprehensive settlement. In the interest of regional peace and stability, we urge the countries concerned to abide strictly by Security Council resolutions so as to promote an early and peaceful resolution of the issue.

We also appreciate the efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in trying to stabilize the regional situation, and we welcome its continued role in this regard. We also look forward to the ECOWAS briefing to be made in a few days. We hope that the Security Council will strengthen its close cooperation with ECOWAS in this regard in order to promote the peace process in the region.

Mr. Granovsky (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We join in thanking Ambassador Chowdhury for introducing the report of the Panel of Experts, and I take this opportunity to express our great appreciation for the work he is doing as Chairman of the sanctions Committee concerning Sierra Leone.

The Russian delegation notes the considerable progress made in implementing the provisions of Security Council resolution 1306 (2000), on prohibiting the import from Sierra Leone of all diamonds except those having a certificate of origin issued by the Government of that country. The launching of the national certification system provided for in resolution 1306 (2000) has not only made it possible to resume diamond exports from Sierra Leone; it has also made possible an almost threefold increase in the volume of rough diamonds exported through official channels. Much remains to be done in order to enhance the effectiveness of the sanctions regime. Moreover, time will be needed for these measures to have an impact on the ability of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) to continue the armed conflict.

The report of the Panel of Experts on sanctions against Sierra Leone contains much useful, detailed information, and it should be helpful. The Experts have done a lot of useful work, compiling an unprecedented volume of material.

At the same time, however, we regret that some conclusions and recommendations in the report are too radical in nature and go beyond the mandate of the Panel as decided by the Security Council. It is also regrettable that the report contains no fully developed provisions on ways to work with certain States in enhancing the effectiveness of the sanctions regime against Sierra Leone, including within the context of the Organization of African Unity and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

I wish to state that the Russian delegation fully shares the concern about the role being played by the illegal diamond mining in and export of diamonds from Sierra Leone in financing ongoing conflict in that country. In this connection, we think it would be advisable to introduce certification systems for rough diamonds in a number of African countries, as recommended in the report of the Panel of Experts. Moreover, we advocate that the rough diamonds regime be based on national control mechanisms.

At the same time, we have doubts about how realistic this six-month period proposed in the report is for establishing and introducing such certification regimes. The question also arises on how to pay for such a measure, since it is obvious that the States named in the report are hardly likely to be able to do so. Obviously, foreign donors would have to be involved. We find it totally unacceptable that the report attempts to raise the question of establishing what has been called an international certification system for rough diamonds. This question is being discussed in the intergovernmental negotiating process. So far, a broad consensus has not emerged.

The process of resolving the problem of conflict diamonds in Sierra Leone and other conflict areas in Africa must be focused primarily on specific measures to break the linkage between the illicit traffic in rough diamonds and the financing of rebel movements, and it should not involve the interest of legal participants in the international diamond business, which account for over 96 per cent of diamonds on the international markets.

However, the main point is that the Security Council did not authorize the Panel of Experts to get involved in the complex intergovernmental negotiating process, which involves very serious economic and financial interests of States and companies, and they are not always the same interests and views. The Panel is certainly not authorized to recommend to the Security Council to come out in favour of the position of any one of the parties in that dialogue.

Very careful further work and analysis of all the factors involved are necessary with regard to the package of sanctions against Liberia recommended in the report. We believe that it is vital to consider in particular the ECOWAS view on this matter.

Mr. Ryan (Ireland): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting. I also thank Ambassador Chowdhury, Chairman of the Security Council Committee concerning Sierra Leone, for his work and for the statement he made earlier. I am grateful also for the presence of the members of the Panel of Experts on Sierra Leone Diamonds and Arms, and I thank them for producing such a worthwhile report.

The Swedish Presidency of the European Union will be making a statement later in this debate with which Ireland fully associates itself.

The report of the Panel of Experts gives an account of the reckless and illegal exploitation of a precious natural resource belonging to the people of Sierra Leone. The evidence before us in the report is detailed, compelling and disturbing. There are widespread violations of the Council's measures. Sierra

Leone's diamond resources are still subject to illegal mining. These resources are converted into arms, which are then used against Sierra Leoneans. The report also speaks of overwhelming evidence of Liberia's active support of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in its campaign against the Government of Sierra Leone, and of assistance from others both in the region and elsewhere. The description of the role played in the conflict by aircraft is salutary, while the chicanery involved in aircraft registration merely attests to the brazen resolve of those who profit so hugely from the arms trade.

The Panel's recommendations are numerous and, in places, far-reaching. Some of them will be easier to implement and some will be more effective than others. However, this should not cause us to shy away from looking at the report in its totality as we consider the next steps to be taken. In doing so, we should keep in mind that concerted action needs to be taken both in the region and in places far away from West Africa.

Ireland welcomes the introduction of a new diamond certification system by the authorities in Sierra Leone. It is a concrete measure to address the problem of conflict and illicit diamonds. We note, though, the Panel's comments on the certification system's viability in the absence of similar controls in neighbouring countries. The role of Sierra Leone's neighbours is crucial in this regard. We are also interested in the Panel's recommendation of an interim certification scheme for all diamond-exporting countries.

The problems relating to the origin of diamonds are not restricted to the producing countries, however. The case studies and the improbable trading statistics revealed by the report show that the importing countries, too, have issues to address. That is why we support the Panel's recommendation of a global certification scheme. We know that the "Kimberley Process" is addressing this topic and we believe it should work as quickly as possible towards this goal. In this context, we welcome the workshop on the envisaged certification scheme, which is to be held in Namibia in March.

It would not be credible to address the report of the panel without referring to the truly grave allegations levelled at the Government of Liberia. The report portrays the Liberian administration playing a highly destabilizing and destructive role in the region. Its multifaceted support for the RUF appears to be strong and systematic. The role it plays in assisting the supply of arms to the region is a part of this and the ease with which aircraft appear to register under the Liberian flag raises serious questions about its licensing laws. The report provides further evidence that Liberia is breaking Security Council embargoes regarding the import of weapons into its own territory, which is prohibited by resolution 788 (1992).

Members and non-members will be aware that the Council is currently considering the introduction of a draft resolution aimed at bringing an end to the destabilizing activities of the Liberian Government. This draft resolution picks up on many of the recommendations contained in the report of the Panel. Ireland has already announced its broad support for the measures contained in the draft resolution. In the days ahead we will work to ensure that the Council can act on these as quickly as possible. Ireland is also now considering, together with the other members of the Council, the establishment of a more permanent, broad-reaching panel to monitor targeted sanctions and illegal trafficking of high-value commodities in armed conflicts, such as those measures now under consideration in the Liberian context.

In resolution 1306 (2000), the adequacy of air traffic control systems in the region was placed within the remit of the Panel of Experts. The report shows that the air traffic control system falls short of being adequate, particularly given the deadly cargoes being carried. There appears to be an almost seamless relationship between poor air traffic control systems and the importation of arms into the region.

Of course, it should be underlined that the regional transgressors are not working in isolation. The suppliers of arms and aircraft are from places far away from West Africa. There is a responsibility on the Governments in whose jurisdictions these people reside and materials originate to vigorously monitor them. The benefit of dealing with only part of the chain will be increasingly limited and, in our view, ultimately damaging to the credibility of the Council and the United Nations.

The Panel makes a number of recommendations. We strongly welcome increased collaboration between the relevant actors and bodies such as the International Civil Aviation Organization, the World Customs Organization and Interpol. Some of the

recommendations will require the commitment of considerable resources by the international community. Some will also entail an increasingly active relationship between the United Nations and other agencies. The Council must therefore continue to act as the driving force in efforts to bring peace to Sierra Leone.

It is crucial, too, that national Governments play a full role in preventing the behaviour detailed in the report. The Governments in the region must redouble efforts to bring peace to Sierra Leone. The best way they can do so is to end the illegal trade in diamonds and arms.

Some measures might be incremental in effect. Nonetheless, we should not underestimate the deterring impact that wider, unwelcome publicity might have on the personalities involved or the practical and psychological impact of measures to disrupt the flow of arms and their carriers into Sierra Leone.

There has been a deterioration in the security of the region. We are all conscious or the almost unbearable pressures on Guinea arising from the enormous numbers of refugees within its borders, exacerbated in recent weeks by further RUF attacks. That the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was forced to search for tens of thousands of missing refugees is a grotesque example of the nature of the problem confronting us. These events are directly linked to the illegal trafficking of Sierra Leone diamonds.

The report of the Panel of Experts serves to highlight the extent of the cynical exploitation centred on Sierra Leone. We are witnessing the plundering of one of the world's most underdeveloped countries by an alliance of well-organized criminals. It is a grotesque commentary that a resource which should be a foundation stone for national development is being used against the very people it should benefit.

The United Nations has been grappling with the conflict in Sierra Leone for almost a decade. The deployment of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, following on from the regional deployment of forces of the Economic Community of West African States, signalled an intensified effort to bring stability to Sierra Leone and to the region. The establishment of the Panel of Experts and today's consideration of its report are further important steps in the search for peace. It is vital that the Security Council reinforce its efforts to bring peace and stability to Sierra Leone and its neighbours by acting on the Panel's report.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Niger, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Moutari (Niger), took the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

Mr. Cunningham (United States of America): The United States welcomes today's Security Council consideration of the report of the Panel of Experts on Sierra Leone Diamonds and Arms. We commend the Panel's Chairman, Martin Chungong Ayafor, and the other Panel members for their excellent work, completed under difficult circumstances.

My delegation also wishes to commend and to thank the Sierra Leone sanctions Committee Chairman, Ambassador Chowdhury, and the members of the Bangladesh Mission for their valuable and persistent efforts to ensure today's Council consideration of the Panel's report.

In addition, I would also like to welcome Liberian Foreign Minister Captan to today's discussion.

The Panel had only four months in which to complete its tasks, yet it succeeded in addressing complex issues involving networks and operations that make a point of either disguising or hiding their activities. The Panel concluded that there is unequivocal and overwhelming evidence that Liberia has been actively supporting the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) at all levels. This confirms the information that I and other Security Council members received during the Council's mission to Sierra Leone in October.

The Panel also focused on the crucial role of conflict diamonds in the arms trade. Controlling the flow of conflict diamonds and illicit arms is essential in order to end the fighting and destabilization in Sierra

Leone and its neighbouring countries. We are intent on ending the illicit arms-for-diamonds trade that has caused so much devastation and human suffering in Sierra Leone and throughout West Africa. We welcome the upcoming visit of Economic Community of West African States Ministers. We will work hard with Council members, the United Nations and countries of the region to bring the Panel's recommendations into being and to deal firmly with illegal trade and with sanctions violators.

I regret that the Security Council has been given a report that is critical of one of our founding Members. It is particularly troubling for the Government of the United States that Liberia, which once championed the cause of Namibian independence, is complicit in the dismemberment of Sierra Leone and the destabilization of Guinea. The Council has begun to consider a draft resolution, proposed by my Government and the United Kingdom, to impose new, multilateral sanctions against the Government of Liberia. Let us be clear on one point: the measures proposed in the draft resolution on Liberia are intended to impact the Government of Liberia. They are designed to bring an end to President Taylor's ongoing support of the RUF and his continued engagement in illicit arms-for-diamonds trafficking. The goal of the proposed sanctions is to target the support system of the presidency and Government leadership, and each proposal was selected with that goal in mind. Ambassador Eldon has outlined the specific measures that are contained in the draft resolution.

We do not seek these restrictive measures out of animosity towards the Liberian people. Our deep historical roots to Liberia are already well known in this Council. The thousands of American development workers, Peace Corps volunteers, missionaries and other friends who have served the people of Liberia are saddened to see what has become of the country that once welcomed them. The tens of thousands of American citizens of Liberian origin now residing in the United States are justifiably concerned for their country of origin, their families and their friends.

Regrettably, we are forced to support new measures against the Government of Liberia because of its illegal support for insurgents in Sierra Leone, its use of one of the world's most repugnant insurgencies as a proxy, its illegal exploitation of the natural wealth of Sierra Leone and its promotion of instability in the region.

We note the recent announcements of the Government of Liberia that it is disengaging from Sierra Leone and ending its support for the RUF. We will examine this closely. But we are concerned that these last-minute announcements in the face of imminent Council action, after months of discussion, are a calculated ruse designed to divide the Security Council rather than to signal any genuine change of policy. It is instructive that it took the possibility of sanctions to move the Government of Liberia to even declaratory action. The steps announced thus far are unconvincing and not sufficient.

There is no argument within the Council, or indeed within the international community, I believe, on the facts. The Government of Liberia created and now sustains the RUF. Our Security Council mission to the region in October heard very clearly, and warned, about Liberia's continuing role. Liberia and its proxies are looting the natural resources of Sierra Leone and fomenting continuing conflict. Its behaviour is a key factor of instability in the region and must be changed.

We have heard proposals — read of proposals — from Foreign Minister Captan on implementing the Panel's recommendations, and we have heard demands that we treat the Liberian Government as innocent until proven guilty. I hope that the Foreign Minister will take a message back to Monrovia that the Council is unanimous in its belief that the Government of Liberia bears major responsibility for the strife in Sierra Leone and the destabilization of the region. The message I hope the Minister will receive from this meeting is that the question before this Council is not whether, but how best, to deal with the role of his Government in the region and to convince it to turn from supporting and directing the RUF to becoming part of the solution. The answer lies in specific actions and not in more patience with empty promises.

The sanctions we have proposed mirror steps recommended in the report of the Panel of Experts. They are designed to undermine the Government of Liberia's ability to conduct war against its neighbours. They will not visit hardships on the people of Liberia. Indeed, we note that several courageous Liberians have risked their lives to call on us to adopt these sanctions.

The report of the Panel of Experts clearly establishes the links between ongoing support for the RUF and continuing violence and suffering in Sierra Leone and the region. We, as a Council, must act to

break that link and to re-establish peace and security in a region beset for too many years with conflict and human hardship.

We look forward later on in this discussion to hearing Minister Captan's remarks, and those of other nations of the region. I have been frank about the nature of the problem we must address. Let me conclude that we are interested in results — in concrete change, not declarations. My Government will welcome the day when we are convinced that Liberia has become part of the solution instead of a force for further suffering and instability.

Mr. Neewoor (Mauritius): Mr. President, my delegation is grateful to you for having organized this important open meeting of the Council this morning.

I wish to thank Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury of Bangladesh for the important briefing he has just given us as Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1132 (1997) concerning Sierra Leone. Thanks to his able stewardship of the Committee, we have before us today a comprehensive report by the Panel of Experts on Sierra Leone Diamonds and Arms, as mandated by Security Council resolution 1306 (2000). The preparation of this important report no doubt required enormous courage, determination and dedicated hard work by the Panel. We are grateful to the Chairman and all the Panel members for this and thank them very warmly for their highly professional, well-researched and bold report and for the important recommendations they have proposed. We welcome the presence of the Panel members in our discussion today.

As I speak on the Panel's report, the image that comes to mind is that of numerous children, women and men who have suffered cruel death or have been severely maimed and disabled in the senseless conflict that has gripped Sierra Leone for several years now. It is not without a sense of revulsion that we note from the Panel's findings that the misery inflicted on the people of Sierra Leone is not really for a legitimate political, social, economic or humanitarian cause championed by the rebel forces, but actually for the self-enrichment of individuals and their friends, at home and elsewhere, utilizing the natural resources of the country and diamonds from Sierra Leone in particular. It is indeed outrageous that the lives of so many innocent Sierra Leonean children, women and men have been extinguished and so many others have been condemned to live miserably for ever with vital limbs cut off simply because a powerful few have entertained a sinister dream to amass unlimited wealth through illegitimate means. It is our firm belief that the collective conscience of mankind, represented here in the United Nations, must demand answers from all those who stand accused of involvement in the heinous crimes against the people of Sierra Leone.

The nexus between unbridled political ambition, weapons trade and diamonds was established earlier by a similar panel on Angola, where again a meaningless civil war, financed through the illegal exploitation of diamonds in rebel-held areas, has left countless dead or maimed for life.

Sierra Leone was the next victim of such a nexus, and now we have another panel investigating the same phenomenon in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The international community cannot afford to allow the diamond-arms-politics nexus to cross yet another frontier, be it in Africa or elsewhere. This deadly phenomenon is too costly in every respect. It is extremely costly, in particular, in terms of human suffering. It also drains national and international resources, which normally should be allocated to the development agenda. We have seen that civil conflicts — as in Sierra Leone, Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo — spill easily across frontiers, and whole subregions get embroiled in them one way or another. I wish to commend the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for its tireless efforts to help resolve conflicts in the West African subregion despite the meagre resources of the member countries.

The international community, through the United Nations, has invested heavily in peacekeeping operations in Sierra Leone, as in other conflict situations. The sanctions regime put in place by the Security Council for Sierra Leone is for the purpose of ending the civil war in the country as soon as possible. The fact that the sanctions have been violated, and the conflict has thus been prolonged, is reprehensible and needs to be condemned most vigorously.

It is already well known that the Sierra Leone sanctions are being violated with impunity by vested interests in the illicit diamond trade and by suppliers of arms to the rebels. The report of the Panel has not only confirmed this, but has also identified the guilty in many cases.

The Panel has also proposed a number of measures for the Security Council to take to better enforce the sanctions regime. We have examined the recommendations carefully and believe they are appropriate. We welcome in particular the recommendations of the Panel to establish a global certification scheme to regulate all trade in diamonds. Such a measure will help put an end to illegal trade in diamonds and to the consequences of this nefarious practice. We also welcome the Panel's recommendations aimed at controlling the flow of arms. In this regard, we believe that the greater onus must rest with the countries where the arms originate. We also support the proposal that a proper mechanism be set up within the United Nations system to better enforce sanctions imposed by the Security Council.

We have no doubt that before making its recommendations the Panel researched the issues fully and pursued every lead to its logical conclusion. We also believe that if any party feels aggrieved, it should have the opportunity to explain its position — backed by proper evidence and within a specified time frame — to the Security Council. In this regard, we wish to underline the need for the Council to take action as quickly as possible on the Panel' s recommendations.

The role of Liberia in sanctions-busting, as well as in destabilising its neighbours, is clear and beyond any doubt. My delegation has taken note of the draft resolution under consideration to further strengthen sanctions against Liberia. We propose to support the draft resolution, and we shall participate actively in its finalization so that it can be adopted by the Council.

Mr. Kuchynksi (Ukraine): First of all, we would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting. It provides an important opportunity for the Council to listen to the views of the Member States and to take them duly into account before the Council takes appropriate action. Our thanks also go to Ambassador Chowdhury for his chairmanship of the Sierra Leone sanctions Committee and for presenting such a comprehensive report.

I wish to take this opportunity to reassure the Council that Ukraine will continue to support the activities of the Committee and will contribute to the collective efforts of the international community to ensure that the measures taken by the Security Council produce tangible results.

We particularly welcome the participation of the members of the Panel of Experts on Sierra Leone Diamonds and Arms at this meeting. We would also like to commend their work in preparing an extensive and comprehensive report, which embraces important aspects of the implementation of the Sierra Leone sanctions. At all stages of the Panel' s work, including during the visit of a member of the Panel to Ukraine, our Government fully cooperated with the Panel of Experts in the fulfilment of their mandate. Ukraine is prepared to maintain such a level of cooperation in the sanctions Committee.

My delegation attaches particular importance to the consideration of the report of the Panel of Experts on Sierra Leone both by the sanctions Committee — which is entrusted to consider information concerning violations and to recommend appropriate measures in response thereto — and by the Security Council proper. We also believe that the active involvement of other Member States in this process will be extremely useful for the comprehensive, all-round examination of various issues raised in the report.

The report and the findings of the Panel of Experts represent an important source of information with regard to the ways and means in which sanctions are being violated and the sources of illegal financing for the activities of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). We commend the efforts of the Panel to address these issues, and we consider the recommendations of the Panel valuable terms of reference for consideration by the Council. We also note as a positive development that a number of measures and initiatives stemming from the recommendations of the Panel — including in the fields of diamond certification and trade, arms and air traffic control — have already been taken by the countries in the region. In this connection, I would like to draw the Council's attention to the recent decisions by the Liberian Government to ground all Liberian registered aircraft, and its proposal to establish for Liberia a United Nations-supervised monitoring regime for diamonds and the arms trade. As we understand it, further measures are being considered at the regional level by member States of the Economic Community of West African States.

All these developments clearly demonstrate that the work of the Panel and its report have already had a visible effect on the turn of events surrounding the Sierra Leone conflict. There is hope that these developments, coupled with a responsible approach by

the Council, will help to advance the peace process in Sierra Leone.

At the same time, I must say that a number of the Experts' recommendations are of a rather controversial character. In our view, they should be looked at from the point of view of their consistency with both the original mandate of the Panel and with the work being done in other forums. As an example, let me refer to the recommendation contained in paragraph 262 of the report, which suggests that consideration could be given to the Security Council embargo on weapons exports from specific producer countries until internationally acceptable certification schemes have been developed.

We are convinced that this issue, as well as a number of other issues of a general or global nature, should be dealt with in the specific competent forums. In this regard, we would like to recall the idea initially put forward by Ukraine regarding the convening of an international experts meeting of major arms-producing countries with a view to elaborating effective measures to prevent the reselling of arms by end-users to third parties. I should also note in this context the ongoing work in the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as well as the anticipated convening at Budapest in April of this year of a meeting on small arms. A similar observation could be made with regard to the recommendation regarding the establishment of a global certification scheme for diamonds, as well as with regard to some other recommendations.

Let me now turn to several points in the report in which my country is specifically referred to. Relevant comments in this regard were made by our delegation in the sanctions Committee. I will therefore try to recall briefly some of those comments.

The Panel extensively looked into the case of the delivery of Ukrainian weapons to Burkina Faso in early 1999. The report confirms that a Ukrainian license for the sale of the weaponry was granted after the Ukrainian authorities had received an authentic end-user certificate from the Ministry of Defence of Burkina Faso. In that regard, I wish to recall that as far as back as April 1999, and later on in June 1999, on its own initiative and after its own thorough investigation, Ukraine provided detailed information about that shipment to the Sierra Leone sanctions Committee. The results of the investigation, which were undertaken by the competent authorities of Ukraine, proved beyond any doubt that the delivery was made in full compliance with the legislation of Ukraine and the relevant requirements of the pertinent Security Council resolutions. The Government of Ukraine expressed its grave concern on several occasions about reports that that shipment had been subsequently re-exported, in violation of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

As to the references in the report to allegations of mercenary activities by Ukrainian nationals, I wish to reconfirm that my delegation formally requested the Committee's assistance in obtaining all relevant information in the Panel's possession that would facilitate a criminal investigation of the facts by Ukraine. The Committee has also been informed that mercenary activities are prohibited under Ukrainian law, which provides for criminal prosecution of offenders. In this respect, I also wish to recall that my Government is now providing over 500 peacekeepers and over 400 armoured personnel carriers and trucks to the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone. This is a concrete illustration of Ukraine's commitment to assist the Government of Sierra Leone and the international community to bring peace and stability to that war-torn country.

I would now like to say a few words regarding the working methods of the Panel. My delegation strongly believes that the following aspects should be given the highest priority in order to ensure the highest standards of credibility and effectiveness in the work of the Experts.

First, the Panel's mandate should be pursued in close cooperation and consultation with the Governments concerned. In other words, we believe that all relevant evidence should be brought to the attention of the Governments so that they will have an opportunity to provide their replies and other relevant information to the Experts when their report is being prepared.

Secondly, all statements or reports should based on thoroughly investigated and corroborated facts.

Thirdly, in our view, the highest degree of credibility should be extended to Governments that bear the main responsibility for compliance with the Charter of the United Nations and the resolutions of the Security Council.

Finally, I would like to reiterate Ukraine's adherence to strengthening the effectiveness of the sanctions regime as an important tool to curtail the ability of the Revolutionary United Front to wage war. We are ready to work closely and actively with the Council on the elaboration of workable measures to achieve that objective.

Mr. Strømmen (Norway): We commend Ambassador Chowdhury and the Panel of Experts on their thorough work, and we welcome their report and their recommendations on improving adherence to the sanctions regime. The report is a vital follow-up to the adoption of resolution 1306 (2000) last year, and it is important that the report is discussed in an open meeting like this, thus focusing publicly on the issues of diamonds and arms as they relate to the conflict in Sierra Leone.

The linkage between the illegal trade in arms and diamonds and war of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone is well documented. The lasting political tension and instability in Sierra Leone and neighbouring countries have grave humanitarian consequences, for instance, in the form of mass movements of refugees and internally displaced persons in the region. The conflict in Sierra Leone is one of the most violent wars in recent African history, and the physical and mental torture inflicted on the civilian population has made the humanitarian needs enormous.

The regional aspects of the conflict in Sierra Leone are cause for great concern. Following the ceasefire between the RUF and the Government of Sierra Leone in November last year, we have seen increased fighting in the border areas between Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia. The fighting has forced humanitarian workers to leave the area, and refugees and internally displaced persons are moving deeper into Guinea, to Conakry and back to Sierra Leone. Tighter implementation of the sanctions and a general improvement regarding the circulation of small arms in the region would improve the security situation for the civilian population and humanitarian workers.

We have carefully studied the recommendations contained in the report of the Panel of Experts, and I would like to comment on some of the more general suggestions on how to improve the sanctions regime established by resolution 1306 (2000) in particular, and other United Nations sanctions and embargoes, in general.

Before I go into the specifics, I would like to make a few general remarks on the use of sanctions. We think sanctions are an important tool for the Security Council and the international community in the efforts to protect international peace and security. The conclusion of the recent report on Angola that the sanctions against UNITA are hurting UNITA's ability to wage war, exemplifies this. Sanctions should, however, be used with caution, and they must be shaped so that they target the real problem at hand. Consequently, we must do what we can to prevent sanctions from having unwanted side effects — for instance, in the form of a negative humanitarian impact on the civilian population that, indeed, we want to protect.

In this connection, let me also stress the importance of the general responsibility of Member States to implement the obligations deriving from United Nations resolutions establishing sanctions regimes. Although countries neighbouring conflict areas are acting in contempt of the United Nations sanctions regime, countries in Europe and other Western States must also pay heed to the fact that the importation of illicit diamonds from Africa and the exportation of arms from Europe to non-State actors, fuel conflicts. Authorities must make all efforts to prevent the sanctions from being eroded by curbing shady businesses and practices.

However, as is also evident from the report of the Panel of Experts, United Nations sanctions regimes are not always followed up properly. We believe that, in order to make existing and future sanctions more effective, the recommendation from the Panel of Experts regarding the establishment of a general monitoring mechanism deserves further, serious consideration. From the recent reports on sanctions related to Sierra Leone and Angola, we see that both regimes share many of the same problems and weaknesses as regards the implementation and violation of the sanctions. We also see from both reports that monitoring is a key issue. The creation of a central capacity within the United Nations system for ongoing monitoring of adherence to Security Council sanctions and embargoes could be a useful tool in strengthening the implementation of sanctions. It could also be a useful contribution to achieving the goals already stated in the 1 December 2000 General

Assembly resolution on conflict diamonds. However, the further details regarding the possible establishment, mandate and shape of such an instrument is a question that needs careful consideration.

Norway supports the idea of establishing, as soon as possible, a standardized global certification scheme for diamonds. As pointed out in the report, existing control mechanisms in Sierra Leone are worthless as long as there are no controls in neighbouring countries. As a sponsor of the General Assembly resolution of 1 December 2000, Norway has already stated its commitment to establishing a global certification mechanism to reduce the trade in conflict diamonds. Pending the establishment of a global certification scheme, Norway supports the establishment of a regional system covering all diamond-exporting States in West Africa.

Many of the recommendations in the report and the problems that they address are related to the primary supporter of the RUF, namely, Liberia. Norway shares the concern of the Panel of Experts that Security Council resolutions on diamonds and weapons are being broken with impunity. Norway shares the opinion that the role played by Liberia in this conflict demands concrete action from the Security Council. In our view, it is now time to go to the heart of the matter and impose sanctions on Liberia in an attempt to make the country stop destabilizing the whole region through its activities relating to, for instance, diamonds and weapons. This conduct is a threat to international peace and security, and the Security Council is currently considering a draft resolution on sanctions against Liberia. This work has Norway's full support.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Singapore.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Chowdhury for his excellent presentation on the report of the Panel of Experts established under resolution 1306 (2000), concerning the collection of information on possible violations of the arms embargo imposed under paragraph 2 of resolution 1171 (1998) and the link between trade in diamonds and trade in arms and related *matériel*, as well as the inadequacy of the air traffic control systems of the West African region.

I would also like to thank the five members of the Panel — Mr. Martin Chungong Ayafor, the Chairman; Mr. Atabou Bodian; Mr. Johan Peleman; Mr. Harjit Singh Sandhu; and Mr. Ian Smillie — for their efforts in producing the report. Each of the Panel's recommendations speaks forcefully for itself and, possibly, for the future of Sierra Leone. The recommendations in the report are sobering, particularly in relation to the allegations against Liberia, its support for the activities of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and its role in fuelling the conflict in Sierra Leone.

The situation concerning Sierra Leone has been on the Security Council's agenda for some years now. The civilian population of Sierra Leone has endured more than 10 years of shocking brutality, failed peace agreements and the murder, rape and mutilation of thousands at the hands of the RUF. We note that if the recommended sanctions proposed against Liberia in the Panel's report are taken up by the Council and implemented, they will constitute the most serious and comprehensive United Nations embargo imposed on an African country in recent times.

Sanctions are an important tool of the Council in carrying out its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It is therefore the obligation of all Members to comply with the sanctions imposed by the Council. However, we need to give teeth to United Nations sanctions and take that one further step to ensure that States do not violate them with impunity. The credibility of the United Nations demands that we deal firmly with sanctions-busters and those who support or take part in activities aimed at undermining the stability of their regional neighbours.

We have read the Panel's report very thoroughly and with an open mind. When we read the report, we bore in mind two very important principles: evidentiary standards and due process. On standards of verification, we are glad to note that the Panel, as stated in paragraph 63 of its report (S/2000/1195), agreed at the outset of its work to use high evidentiary standards in its investigations. According to the report, this required at least two credible and independent sources of information to substantiate a finding. On due process, we also note from paragraph 63 of the report that

> "Wherever possible, the Panel also agreed to put allegations to those concerned in order to allow them the right of reply."

Today's debate is very much a part of this process. That is why we have provided the opportunity

today for all affected States to be heard on the report. Some countries have availed themselves of this opportunity. In this connection, we look forward to hearing the views of the ministerial delegation of the Economic Community of West African States in the coming week. We also urge all other affected parties to communicate their views to the Council soon.

It is imperative that the Council act quickly, but we must also be seen to act justly. However, this Council must not flinch from acting resolutely and take all necessary measures once such a course of action is clearly justified.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Sierra Leone, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Kamara (Sierra Leone): My delegation would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council in the first month of the new year and the first month of your country's term as a non-permanent member of the Council. I should like to add that my delegation is also pleased to see the representative of a sister Commonwealth nation directing the work of this body. I would like to assure you, Mr. President, of our cooperation in addressing the complex problems on the Council's agenda, including those pertaining to Sierra Leone. Allow me also to pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Lavrov of the Russian Federation, for the efficient manner in which he conducted the Council's affairs during the month of December.

As the Security Council meets to begin preliminary consideration of the report of the Panel of Experts set up to collect information on the possible link between trade in Sierra Leone diamonds and trade in arms, I think it is relevant to cite the following lines from President Kabbah's broadcast message to the people of Sierra Leone on 21 February 1999, almost two years ago — this was immediately after the mayhem that killed over 5,000 people in Freetown in January 1999. This message was subsequently circulated as a document of the Security Council:

> "I would like to appeal to the United Nations Security Council, especially the permanent members who have the political and military means at their disposal, to exert pressure, first of all, on those States and individuals that continue to supply the weapons and logistics that are being used to kill our people. It is no secret that without such external support, the RUF [Revolutionary United Front] and its allies would not have had the capacity to maintain their military campaigns and wreak such havoc in several parts of the country." *(S/1999/186, annex)*

President Kabbah went on to say,

> "The atrocities have been horrendous.
>
> "The Security Council should act before it is too late. The consequences of inaction or of continued lukewarm responses would be disastrous, not only for the people of Sierra Leone, but also for millions of their neighbours in the entire West African subregion." *(ibid.)*

This was in 1999.

In the view of my delegation, the report of the United Nations Panel of Experts on Sierra Leone Diamonds and Arms, which is now before this Council, is a loud and clear response to President Kabbah's appeal for further action against those who continue to support the RUF in prolonging the brutal conflict in Sierra Leone through illegal trade in diamonds and weapons and in exporting terror to neighbouring countries in West Africa.

The Government of Sierra Leone has studied the report carefully. Its findings are credible. Its recommendations are far-reaching but viable. We maintain the view that the report constitutes a landmark discovery regarding the major impediments to the restoration of peace and stability in Sierra Leone. Members of the Panel performed their assignments responsibly and as objectively as possible, and we commend them for a job well done. In the same vein, we would also like to commend Ambassador Chowdhury, Chairman of the Security Council Committee.

For almost 10 years, and notwithstanding the brutality of the rebel atrocities committed in Sierra Leone, the Government of Sierra Leone did not openly name any State or individual involved in supporting the RUF. In the name of diplomacy, in the name of African brotherhood, in the name of African solidarity, in the spirit of good-neighbourliness, and with the hope that reason would soon prevail, the Government of Sierra

Leone, albeit reluctantly, refrained from subscribing to the tactic of "name and shame".

But then we had to ask ourselves how long African solidarity should be allowed to overshadow the plight of the victims of the conflicts and prolong their suffering. How long should the identities of those directly and actively involved in blood-diamond transactions and illicit arms transactions across our borders be concealed under the cloak of African brotherhood? Indeed, how long should anyone, including members of the Security Council, continue to ignore those who support rebel movements that abduct, hold hostage, humiliate, disarm and even hurt and kill United Nations peacekeepers and humanitarian workers? As we know, many of those peacekeepers are from the developing world, including Africans who have left their homes and families to help keep the peace in our countries under the flag of the United Nations.

Today, against the background of the painful events of the past several years, the revelations contained in the report of the United Nations Panel of Experts and the serious humanitarian crisis now emerging along the borders of the Mano River Union States, we are compelled to say, enough is enough. I would like to repeat: enough is enough.

Therefore, the Sierra Leone delegation would like to state for the record that it concurs with the findings of the United Nations Panel of Experts. In particular, we agree with the experts that there is

> "unequivocal and overwhelming evidence that Liberia has been actively supporting the RUF at all levels, in providing training, weapons and related *matériel*, logistical support, a staging ground for attacks and a safe haven for retreat and recuperation". (*S/2000/1195, enclosure, para. 20*)

In this regard, we concur with the Panel that the Security Council should take effective and appropriate mandatory measures to deal with this serious threat to international peace and security.

We take this position, first, because it is the truth that whatever terminology or euphemism is used to describe relations between the RUF and Liberia, there is evidence that Liberia has been providing the RUF with military and other types of assistance to wage and prolong the conflict in our country. This is the truth. We have a saying in Sierra Leone: telling a friend the truth should in no way destroy the friendship.

Secondly, we have taken this position because of the repeated calls for the international community to assist Africa in ending its armed conflicts and in dealing with the root causes and socio-economic consequences of those conflicts. In this connection, we are reminded of what Secretary-General Kofi Annan told the summit of the Organization of African Unity in Lomé last July:

> "My friends, let us face some unpleasant facts. Africa is the only region where conflicts are not decreasing. Africa contains almost half of the world's refugees and internally displaced persons." (*SG/SM/7485/Rev.1*)

A third reason for taking the position I have just outlined is that Sierra Leone would like the Security Council to seriously consider endorsing the recommendations of the Panel in a binding resolution under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. By doing so, the Council would be helping to avert further escalation of the conflict in the West African subregion. Here my delegation recalls that a large number of States and organizations have been asking the Security Council to change the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone from peacekeeping to peace enforcement. In other words, they want more effective action to end the conflict in Sierra Leone.

I should also add that our subregional organization, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), has recently told the Secretary-General of the United Nations that in order to successfully discharge their mandate, there is every likelihood that the ECOWAS troops to be deployed along the border areas of Guinea and Liberia may need to employ strong rules of engagement to help stop further armed incursions and restore peace in those areas.

For those who, for one reason or the other, have reservations about the recommendations of the Panel of Experts, which advocate strong measures by the Security Council, my delegation would like to recall the following.

Some delegations say that sanctions should not hurt innocent people. We agree. But weapons bought from the sale of our diamonds are being used to maim

and kill thousands of our people in Sierra Leone. Sierra Leoneans have lives too. There are thousands of Sierra Leonean refugees and displaced persons who are unable to return to their homes because of the prolongation of the conflict in Sierra Leone and the escalation of cross-border skirmishes.

The people of Sierra Leone, including traumatized victims of the rebel war, are suffering as a result of the continued occupation of the main diamond areas of the country by the RUF and the illegal export of diamonds from those areas, mainly through Liberia.

For three months last year, while the RUF and its supporters were engaged in the traffic of so-called conflict or blood diamonds and weapons, the Government of Sierra Leone, under the provisions of Security Council resolution 1306 (2000), was not allowed to export any diamonds.

The diamond certification regime instituted by the Government of Sierra Leone last October is under the scrutiny of the United Nations and subject to periodic review by the United Nations sanctions Committee on Sierra Leone.

While Liberia continues to freely support the RUF in the acquisition of arms, in violation of Security Council resolution 1171 (1998), the Government of Sierra Leone is complying with the provisions of that resolution relating to the stipulation that the importation of arms and military equipment by the Government for its legitimate self-defence should be done through prior-named points of entry and that relevant information about such imports should be communicated to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who shall then promptly notify all Member States.

My delegation holds the view that these and other points should be taken into account in any discussion by the Security Council about the imposition of sanctions based on the recommendations of the Panel of Experts. In short, we are saying that Sierra Leone is itself under certain constraints as a result of existing mandatory Security Council measures relating to arms and diamonds. However, I can assure the Council that the people of Sierra Leone consider such constraints to be temporary hurdles along the path towards peace and security in Sierra Leone and neighbouring countries.

My delegation has no doubt that the endorsement by the Security Council and the implementation of most of the measures proposed by the Panel of Experts will help to bring about genuine peace in Liberia and Sierra Leone and to stabilize the entire West African subregion.

The President: I thank the representative of Sierra Leone for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia. On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to him and invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Captan (Liberia): The Government of Liberia expresses its gratitude to the Security Council for the opportunity to make a statement at this important hearing on the report of the Panel of Experts appointed pursuant to Security Council resolution 1306 (2000) in relation to Sierra Leone.

The Government of Liberia notes the report of the Panel of Experts with serious reservations. Members of the Security Council will recall that the involvement of the Government of Liberia in the resolution of the conflict in Sierra Leone is a result of a mandate from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), contained in a final communiqué issued in Bamako. In that communiqué, the Authority of Heads of State of ECOWAS requested the President of Liberia to

> "get personally involved in solving the issues which hamper the peace process in Sierra Leone and to seek adequate solutions in consultation with the other Heads of State".

Also, the Government of Liberia could not have been an uninterested bystander. Liberia and Sierra Leone share common historical, cultural and family ties, as well as a common border. In addition, Liberia is hosting over 100,000 Sierra Leonean refugees as a result of the civil conflict. It is the considered position of the Government of Liberia that peace in Sierra Leone is synonymous with to peace in Liberia. There can be no peace and stability in Liberia until there are enduring peace and stability in Sierra Leone and other neighbouring countries.

In keeping with the ECOWAS mandate, the President of Liberia organized several meetings in Monrovia between the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) leadership, ECOWAS leaders — including the Chairman of ECOWAS, President Alpha Konaré; the

President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo; the Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, President Gnassingbé Eyadema; President Yahya Jammeh of the Gambia — and officials of the United States Government and the United Nations, aimed at moving the peace process forward. Meetings were also convened between leaders of the RUF and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) in Monrovia, which led to the return to Freetown of Corporal Foday Sankoh and Johnny Paul Koroma. The President also averted a potential armed confrontation between Foday Sankoh and Sam Bockarie that had the potential of derailing the peace process in Sierra Leone. The President accepted the request of ECOWAS, in consultation with the United Nations, to remove Sam Bockarie from Sierra Leone to Liberia.

It must be recalled that, at the request of ECOWAS and the United Nations, the President of Liberia negotiated the release of over 500 United Nations peacekeepers who had been taken hostage by the RUF. In addition, Liberia has permitted RUF delegations going to ECOWAS-sponsored meetings to transit through its territory. Liberia has also permitted RUF officials to hold meetings on its territory with officials of ECOWAS and the United Nations. The appointment of a new interlocutor and leadership for the RUF was achieved as a result of an initiative of the President of Liberia at a meeting held between some heads of State of ECOWAS and the RUF commanders in Monrovia on 26 July 2000. These efforts on the part of the President of Liberia were made with the sole objective of furthering the peace process in Sierra Leone.

Notwithstanding these initiatives, the Government of Liberia has and continues to be the target of grossly unsubstantiated allegations of diamond smuggling and gun running with the Revolutionary United Front.

On the issue of diamonds, the Government of Liberia can neither deny nor confirm that the war in Sierra Leone is financed by the sale of conflict diamonds. What the Government of Liberia can confirm is that it is neither connected nor a party to the illicit trade of Sierra Leonean diamonds. If, as claimed in the report, the Government of Liberia was exporting and selling $217-million-worth of diamonds annually to Belgium, the report fails to provide evidence of a trail of financial transactions implicating the Government of Liberia.

According to the Panel's report, during the period 1994-1999, a total of $227-million-worth of illicit diamonds was traded annually between the three neighbouring countries of Guinea, Gambia and Côte d'Ivoire, in addition to the alleged $217-million value of illicit Sierra Leonean diamonds that were purportedly exported from Liberia. Significantly, these figures exclude the official exports from Sierra Leone. It is puzzling that the experts' report would attempt to have the international community believe that, during this period, the value of Sierra Leone's annual production of diamonds was approximately $450 million. Clearly, these figures are grossly inflated. No one familiar with the industry would agree with the Panel that the pre-conflict value of Sierra Leone's annual production was anywhere close to $450 million.

It is acknowledged that smuggling is endemic to the diamond industry worldwide and not limited to Sierra Leone. Historically, Liberia itself has faced this problem and previous Governments have been unable to adequately address it. This Government finds itself in a much weaker position, having recently emerged from a disastrous seven-year civil war that completely destroyed the basic national infrastructure. The problem has been further exacerbated by the Government's lack of resources and personnel, including customs, immigration, transport and communications.

Liberia's export statistics clearly illustrate that the 1987 pre-war official diamond export was 295,000 carats. This is in contrast to the official export figures of 8,500 carats for 1998 and 1999 respectively. The Ministry of Finance estimates that this represents only 10 per cent of the domestic production, and the Ministry of Land, Mines and Energy estimates it to be 20 per cent. In other words, depending on which figure is used, between 80 and 90 per cent of Liberia's domestic production of diamonds is smuggled out of the country. This should refute the conclusion reached in paragraph 89 of the Panel's report that "it is not conceivable that so much of Liberia's own diamond production could avoid the detection of government".

With regard to the supply of arms to the RUF, the Panel's conclusion erroneously presupposes that virtually all of RUF's weapons are obtained from external sources, in this case Liberia. However, the Panel negates this conclusion when it recognizes the following sources of weapons acquired or seized by the RUF — namely, considerable amounts of weaponry

seized from the Sierra Leone armed forces; a significant number of weapons seized from a Guinean unit of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) in January 2000; and another Guinean unit serving under the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) that had previously been disarmed during ambushes and seizures. Great amounts of rifles were lost to the rebels, as well as eight armoured personnel carriers and several other military vehicles, when UNAMSIL contingents were kidnapped and disarmed in May 2000. This can be seen in paragraph 179 of the Panel's report. Additional sources of weapons to the RUF include those seized from the Indian contingent of UNAMSIL.

In addition, the RUF obtained weapons directly from the Sierra Leone army inventory when the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), headed by Johnny Paul Koroma, took power in May 1997 and entered into a power-sharing arrangement with the RUF. The Sierra Leone Government may also have been a source of supply to the RUF when it requested two waivers of the provisions of the ECOWAS protocol on the small arms moratorium on 23 June 2000 and 18 July 2000. The waivers were to permit the importation from the United Kingdom of five rounds of 7.62 NATO ammunition, 4,000 rounds of 81 mm mortar ammunition, and five million rounds of 7.62 NATO link ammunition for General Purpose Machine Guns (GPMGs).

Given the pattern of events in Sierra Leone, it is not an unreasonable assumption that a substantial portion of these shipments also ended up in RUF's hands. And it should be noted that in paragraph 82 of the report, it is confirmed that additional arms shipments were received by the RUF from neighbouring Guinea based on RUF diamond sales made to mid-level Guinean military officers. The report further admits in paragraph 248 that the RUF received weapons captured from ECOMOG forces that fell victim to various ambushes.

Given all of these well-documented non-Liberian sources of arms received by the RUF, we find it unfair and erroneous that the Panel would conclude that the primary supplier of arms received by the RUF is Liberia and that this arms flow is a result of official Liberian policy. The Government of Liberia acknowledges that it maintains a training base in Gbartala, Bong County, Liberia, which provides much-needed training facilities for its internal security organizations, including members of the Special Security Services, which provides executive protection, and the Anti-Terrorist Unit, which provides protection for foreign embassies and sensitive Government installations. Non-governmental organizations and foreign observers, including the United States military attaché, have been permitted to visit the training facilities from time to time. The Government of Liberia is currently engaged in discussions with the International Committee of the Red Cross to provide workshops on humanitarian law at the training base. It must be re-emphasized that the Government of Liberia does not train any foreigners at this facility.

As regards Liberian Government initiatives, the Government has reacted to allegations of illicit activities on its border by making concrete proposals to the United Nations to ensure proper monitoring and verification. These have included, among other measures, the deployment of UNAMSIL on the Liberian side of the border with Sierra Leone, the deployment of international monitors at all ports of entry within Liberia, the establishment of a multi-spectral aerial surveillance of Liberian borders and the provision of technical assistance to develop Liberian indigenous capacity to monitor illegal trading of diamonds. Unfortunately, these measures have yet to be considered by the Security Council. In light of the current situation, the Government of Liberia considers it imperative that these measures be given urgent consideration by the Council.

In the area of aircraft registry, on Monday, 22 January 2001, the Government of Liberia took the decision to ground all Liberian-registered aircraft and has requested the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to notify the civil aviation authorities of all member States of this action. The Government has also revoked the appointment of all agents acting on its behalf in matters of aircraft inspection and registration. These measures are in recognition of the fact that many aircraft fly the Liberian flag without the knowledge or authorization of the Government of Liberia, and that some of the aircraft actually registered under the Liberian flag obtained their authorization during the period of the civil war and prior to the election of the present Administration. The Government of Liberia has sought the assistance of ICAO in providing technical assistance to improve its capacity in air traffic control and surveillance.

As concerns disengagement from the Sierra Leonean peace process, while it is the desire of the Government of Liberia to continue to be constructively engaged in the search for peace in Sierra Leone, it is equally true that it cannot continue its engagement in the midst of the grave allegations levied against it by the Panel of Experts, especially the accusation that Liberia has not played a constructive role in Sierra Leone.

In view of the foregoing, the Liberian Government has embarked upon an alternative policy of disengagement from Sierra Leone. Consistent with this policy, all RUF members, including Mr. Sam Bockarie, have been asked to leave Liberia. All members of the RUF have left, with the exception of Mr. Bockarie, whose return to Sierra Leone the RUF leadership has rejected. Cognizant of the ongoing constructive dialogue between the RUF and UNAMSIL, the confidence-building visits into RUF-held territory, the opening of roads and the ongoing discussions concerning the deployment of UNAMSIL forces into RUF territory, the Government of Liberia, in order to avoid a breakout of hostilities occasioned by the return of Mr. Bockarie, has engaged the Chairman of ECOWAS in discussions aimed at identifying a third country that will accept him.

The transiting of RUF members through Liberian territory will no longer be permitted, nor will they be allowed to attend meetings on Liberian territory. My Government is prepared to take further actions to close its border with Sierra Leone and to recuse itself from all discussions on the peace process in Sierra Leone, should the international community deem it necessary.

On the subject of diamonds, cognizant of the complex and difficult problems associated with the monitoring and control of diamond trading in its territory and the subregion, the Government of Liberia has decided to seek the assistance and cooperation of the United Nations in putting into place an appropriate mechanism for the control and monitoring of the diamond trade, especially with the view towards maximizing transparency and control. The Government of Liberia proposes the following.

First, two or more buying companies recognized by the World Diamond Council should be encouraged by the United Nations to set up buying stations in Liberia. Secondly, all diamonds bought by the companies should be exported through the Central Bank of Liberia under international guidelines, as set up under Security Council resolution 1306 (2000), dealing with the certification of Sierra Leonean diamonds. Thirdly, the United Nations should place a monitoring regime at the Central Bank of Liberia to oversee this process for six months. Fourthly, an embargo should be placed on all diamonds exported from Liberia except those certified under this regime. Fifthly, the international community should assist Liberia by providing technical assistance in developing an internationally acceptable certification regime, in order to develop its capacity in dealing with the illegal trading of diamonds.

As regards cross-border incursions, the ongoing cross-border armed incursions within the Mano River Union is a matter of grave concern for the Government of Liberia, which has suffered four different attacks on its territory from neighbouring Guinea. Based upon the complaint of the Government of Liberia to ECOWAS, a committee was established to investigate the incursions. After its report to the heads of State, the committee confirmed that the attacks on Liberia did emanate from the territory of Guinea and were by Liberian dissidents. It was the recommendation of the committee that a military observer mission be deployed at the borders of Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone and that dialogue ensue among the heads of State. Liberia welcomes the ECOWAS committee's recommendations and calls upon the United Nations to urgently facilitate the implementation of these recommendations by assisting ECOWAS with its logistical requirements.

Furthermore, Liberia unequivocally condemns all dissident activities within the Mano River Union, including the recent attacks in Guinea.

I now turn to other concerns of the Government of Liberia. The Government expresses its concern at the inclusion of Mr. Ian Smillie as a member of the Panel of Experts. Mr. Smillie co-authored an article in January 2000 entitled, "The Heart of the Matter: Sierra Leone, Diamonds & Human Security". In the article, he indicts the Liberian Government on charges of supplying the RUF with guns and providing an outlet for the sale of illicit diamonds. Mr. Smillie's conclusions were reached without local investigation, and he did not confront the Government of Liberia with his purported evidence, as is required under the right of reply. His presence on the Panel was prejudicial from its inception.

The Panel of Experts exceeded the mandate provided for it under paragraph 19 (d) of Security Council resolution 1306 (2000), which enjoined the Panel to make

> "observations and recommendations on strengthening the implementation of the measures imposed by paragraph 2 of resolution 1171 (1998), and of those imposed by paragraph 1 above, no later than 31 October 2000".

The measures imposed by the Council referred to above include the prohibition of the direct or indirect import of rough diamonds from Sierra Leone and the prohibition of the sale and supply of arms and related materiel to non-governmental forces in Sierra Leone. The mandate of the Panel envisioned recommendations from experts that would provide remedial measures to strengthen the measures already imposed by the Council, not punitive measures.

The extreme prejudice of the Panel is demonstrated by its recommendation for the imposition of a travel ban on Liberian officials and diplomats by United Nations Member States, a measure that has no basis in the Charter of the United Nations and that denies Liberia the opportunity to conduct its external relations as a sovereign Member of the United Nations. In addition, the proposed ban on the export of Liberian timber is intended to deny the Government substantial revenue, which funds social programmes in the areas of education, health and social welfare. The claim by the Panel that timber revenue is used to purchase arms for the RUF is a contradiction of the Panel's submission that the revenue from diamond sales "is more than enough to sustain its military activities" *(S/2000/1195, para. 80)*.

We wish to draw the attention of the Security Council to the initiative of the member States of our regional organization, the Economic Community of West African States, with regard to the problem in Sierra Leone.

Since the inception of the civil war in Sierra Leone, ECOWAS has remained seized of this matter, while enjoying the support and cooperation of the United Nations. ECOWAS has not only committed peacekeepers to Sierra Leone, but has also formulated a peace plan through negotiations involving all the parties to the conflict and international guarantors. Furthermore, ECOWAS has contributed a significant proportion of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) forces. Sharing the concerns of the Security Council, ECOWAS established a commission of enquiry to investigate the illicit trade in diamonds and the trade in arms — a commission that has yet to receive funding assistance from the international community. Quite recently, ECOWAS successfully negotiated a ceasefire agreement with the RUF, which has led to a general cessation of hostilities, the return of some of the seized UNAMSIL equipment, access to RUF territory and negotiations towards the deployment of UNAMSIL forces into RUF-controlled territory within the next few weeks.

These efforts are ongoing and reflect the commitment and resolve of the member States of ECOWAS to make every effort to achieve a pacific settlement of the Sierra Leonean conflict. It is the hope of the Government of Liberia that the Security Council will encourage, support and utilize this regional initiative, which has proved successful in the past, in Liberia during its civil war. We therefore welcome the upcoming meeting between the ECOWAS delegation and the Security Council.

Within the context of regional peace, security and stability, the Government of Liberia reaffirms its commitment to the Mano River Union binding Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. It unreservedly condemns the atrocities and other human rights abuses inflicted on the civilian population in Sierra Leone as a result of the civil crisis in that country. Those members of the RUF and all others found guilty of violating the Lomé Agreement after its signing must be held accountable for their actions.

The Government of Liberia equally condemns the continuing cross-border attacks, which are contributing to a humanitarian crisis throughout the region. It is imperative that the countries in the subregion, particularly the Mano River Union countries, identify the root causes of instability in the region, including security concerns, and take timely measures to build confidence and restore peace and stability, as the best means of promoting the welfare and development of their respective countries and peoples.

Liberia, as a founding member of the United Nations, remains committed to implementing all resolutions adopted by the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security. In light of the very serious charges made against Liberia and its concrete decisions to address the concerns of

the international community, the Government of Liberia requests the cooperation and support of the Security Council in the undertakings of the Government. This approach, coupled with the regional initiative of ECOWAS, would yield far greater positive results than would the imposition of punitive measures.

The Government of Liberia intends to remain a constructive partner within the comity of nations. It will do whatever is reasonable and positive to contribute to the search for peace in the region.

The Government of Liberia proposes a new programme geared at controlling the illicit diamond trade in West Africa, in Liberia in particular. It requests active United Nations involvement in securing Liberia's borders, so as to avoid the appearance of any interaction with the RUF. It has grounded all Liberian-registered aircraft and has appealed to the International Civil Aviation Organization to assist in the proper registration and use of Liberian-registered aircraft. It agrees to have its airports and seaports monitored by the United Nations to eliminate the entry of war materials which could end up in Sierra Leone. It calls for monitoring of all borders within the Mano River Union to minimize and eliminate cross-border conflicts. It has disengaged itself from all activities related to the peace process in Sierra Leone. It agrees to work in harmony with the United Nations in all of its efforts to end the suffering of the people of Sierra Leone.

The Government of Liberia strongly condemns the atrocities and other human rights abuses inflicted upon the innocent people of Sierra Leone. It is the view of the Government that the perpetrators of these heinous crimes should be brought to justice.

The seven-year Liberian civil war destroyed the country's infrastructure and its productive base, weakened its private sector, reduced its tax base, exacerbated its debt burden, weakened its monetary and fiscal-management capacity, weakened its institutional capacity, ruined its investment climate and created an unprecedented unemployment rate of 85 per cent. Liberia's production base has been narrowed and is dependent mainly on its timber and rubber exports. The external debt burden now totals $2.731 billion, which is considered too high for meaningful economic development.

Liberia faces the challenge of addressing the needs of its population, of which 55 per cent are under 18 years of age and 45 per cent are under the age of 14. Furthermore, 73.2 per cent of Liberia's women are of childbearing age. Poverty-reduction assistance programmes to this population have been withheld through the influence of powerful States, under a regime of punitive sanctions. Nevertheless, we remain hopeful that this Council will not permit the suffering of the Liberian people to be further exacerbated and to remain unabated.

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia for his statement.

We have heard the last speaker for the first part of the meeting. There are a number of speakers remaining on my list. With the concurrence of the members of the Council, I intend to suspend the meeting now, and to resume it at 3 p.m. sharp.

The meeting was suspended at 1.15 p.m.